



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

The Politics of the Middle

Citation for published version:

Ellis, R 2011, 'The Politics of the Middle: Re-centering Class in the Postcolonial', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 69-81. <<http://www.acme-journal.org/vol10/Ellis2011.pdf>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies

Publisher Rights Statement:

Author Post-Print. This is an Open-Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No-Derivative Works License. Published by the University of British Columbia (2011)

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



The Politics of the Middle: Re-centering class in the postcolonial

[For Publication in ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies]

Introduction

Some of us . . . well I like to call us ‘Midnight’s Children’¹, meaning we grew up around independence, and got political at that time. Some people call us Gandhians, and that is a bit of a conflict with this younger generation.

Geeta reminisces with me one afternoon in her large office, among the shady lanes of southern Chennai. As a seasoned political activist, a matriarch of urban civil society, an English-educated professional, and a Brahmin, Geeta’s comment is evocative of the shifting contours of class politics in urban India. On the one hand, reference to “Midnight’s Children” can be interpreted as nostalgia for a past era of nationalist politics. On the other hand, the ‘younger generation’ to which Geeta refers is a nod to the increased political presence of a ‘new middle class’ as important players within urban civil society. Thus the ‘politics of the middle’ serves as a metaphor for the intersections between older and newer forms of elite political power, as well as the ways that ‘middle-class-ness’ has emerged as an important political category. This paper focuses on middle class political formations as they are articulated through personal reflections on social, political, and cultural change in urban India. In doing so the paper contends that class

¹ *Midnight’s Children* is the title of the 1981 novel by Salman Rushdie. *Midnight’s Children* is an allegory of the struggles of the newly independent Indian nation and is considered one of the classic works of postcolonial literature.

politics, and particularly emerging forms of middle class political participation are formation, important to the postcolonial story. The paper goes on to advocate for a theory of class that accounts for the interaction between political and economic restructuring as well as the more ethnographic, personal ways in which class identities are expressed, imagined and performed.

Middle class political formations have recently earned critical attention within academia as the ‘new’ Indian middle class has become an increasingly relevant economic, cultural, and political category. Scholars of the new Indian middle class show us that class relations in urban India are produced out of multiple and overlapping processes including: the restructuring of urban labor and land markets (Banerjee-Guha, 2006; D’Costa, 2003), the proliferation of global commodities and consumer culture (Fernandes, 2004; Liechty, 2003), as well as the persistence of culturally and historically specific structures of caste, class, and gendered inequalities (Fernandes, 2000; Radhakrishnan, 2008; Rajagopal, 1999). These amalgamations have important implications for the material condition of Indian cities. For example, recent work draws attention to the middle class neighborhood associations, urban task force, and civil society groups that have become increasingly active in remaking India’s urban spaces (Arabindoo, 2005; Bhan, 2009; Fernandes, 2004; Harriss, 2007; Nair, 2006). Much of this work highlights the ways in which middle class political activism has set out to remake Indian cities to exclude marginal groups, reproduces classed and propertied interests, and to support capital accumulation (ibid).

This focus on the production and reproduction of class structures in the context of urban India represents something of a departure from the influence of postcolonial studies within South Asian social theory (see Fernandes, 2006: 22). The postcolonial critique which held that Western conceptions of class were unsuited to the Indian context led many postcolonial scholars to focus

on cultural practices and to often ignore class as an important element of postcolonial identity. As a tool for debasing and rethinking old conceptual categories, postcolonial studies have shied away from traditional class analyses, and instead focused on the more cultural construction of class and class identity. However more recent work has asserted that middle class political formations are under-theorized within the postcolonial literature, even representing a place that postcolonial studies forgot (Fernandes and Heller, 2006). This critique is intensified in the context of the increasingly aggressive, exclusionist, and at times fascist forms of identity politics that have become a persistent feature of Indian democracy over the past two decades (Hansen, 1999; Sarkar, 2000). The importance of more structural forms of inequality, and the increased frequency with which cultural claims are used to actualize and justify material exclusions has led some commentators to express a concern with postcolonial studies' (anti)political project².

Without dismissing the seriousness of this criticism, it would be imprudent to suggest that postcolonial theory could not or should not be brought to bear on analyses of structural inequality. Recent work exemplifies the potential of postcolonial approaches to generate analyses that are both politically grounded and, which take seriously the material implications of postcolonial "politicocultural" formations (McFarlane, 2008a; see also McFarlane, 2008b; Gregory, 2004; Meyers, 2006). Much of the discussions of postcolonialism in Geography emphasizes the potential for postcolonial critique to expose, deconstruct, and debase the discursive and ideological legacies of colonialism and to 'hear' or recover the experiences of the colonized (Jacobs, 1996; Nash, 2002; Sidaway, 2000: 594). The importance of uncovering untold

² This critique reflects the particular history of postcolonial thought in the South Asian context, particularly the influence of a more post-structural Subaltern Studies that emerged in the 1980s (see Sarkar's critique of Subaltern Studies, 1993; 2000; and response from Chakrabarty, 2000). Much of this critique has expressed concern that the 'post-structuralist turn' in subaltern studies has authorized an "uncritical cult" of the popular, a charge which takes on new meaning in the context of the rise of Hindu political fascism (ibid; Brass, 1993).

or subjugated histories also offers up the possibility of research methods that lay outside the Western traditions of historiography and the production of authorized narratives. In the context of middle class politics in India, this approach proposes looking to the more everyday, ethnographic and lived ways in which class structures articulate with political identities.

But any presupposition of ‘class structures’ presents a conceptual slippery slope, as is highlighted by a post-structural account of class. As part of the introduction to a recent edited collection, *Class and its Others*, Gibson-Graham et al. (2000) argue, in true post-structural fashion, for an understanding of class as constructed. However this claim is not left empty as they go on to advocate for a class analysis that incorporates the fluid, constructed nature of the category, as well as the importance of economic relationships and exploitations between producers and laborers. In a similar vein, Fernandes and Heller (2006) have described the new Indian middle class as a “class in practice” to argue that this class is characterized by its political practices and cultural strategies that reproduce economic privilege³. All this suggests that class structures and identities weave together economic, political and cultural processes. In the context of postcolonial urban India, an awareness of the multiple ways that class comes into being enables an analysis of the cultural and political practices that go into the performance and negotiation of class identity, as well as the ways these practices articulate with a shifting political-economy. Such an approach helps navigates a path between either purely economic characterizations of class that focus on income and occupation, and the exclusive focus on cultural capital as the warp and woof of the Indian middle class. This paper attempts a similar navigation by focusing on the ways in which new and old class categories are expressed and negotiated through contemporary forms of middle class political participation. By engaging with

³ For a similar argument in the context of a Kathmandu middle class see Mark Liechty, 2003.

ethnographic, individual reflections on the transformation of class identity the paper also highlights generational difference and divergence as important, but often ignored aspects of middle class political formation.

The Politics of the Middle in Chennai

In 2007 I travelled to Chennai India to undertake a research project which explored middle class political identities. I was particularly interested in the ‘new’ Indian middle class as a group which was both materially and discursively tied to economic liberalization and globalization. The liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991 (and arguably well before then) has had far-reaching structural impacts on India’s urban economies (Khilnani, 1999; Fernandes, 2004). One of the most visible of these effects has been the increase in foreign direct investment into Indian cities, and the growth of new forms of employment, like information and communication technologies and other ‘new economy’ work. Along with these shifts, the image of a new middle class touts the benefits of economic liberalization and the promise of globalizing markets. Rapidly expanding commodity markets and advertising campaigns aimed at the middle class present an image of a homogenously affluent, globally connected, modern, and youthful class (Fernandes, 2006). Yet despite all this rhetorical hype, scholars of this class have been careful to point out the difficulties in applying traditional class analysis to the new Indian middle class. Fernandes and Heller (2006) suggest that this difficulty is the result of a less institutionalized relationship between property and the wage labor form in the Indian context. This means that Indian middle class cohesion does not derive solely from property, and is highly dependent on forms of education and cultural capital (ibid, 2006: 504; see also Deshpande, 2003). In the Indian context this type of capital is comprised out of particular identities (caste,

community, or regional) as well as particularly competencies (English proficiency, education, and social connections) (Harriss, 2006)⁴.

But over the last two decades, the elite premium on certain forms of cultural and political capital has been confronted with the expansion of education as an economic strategy, new competition within government employment, and the political mobility of low caste and other minority groups (Jafferlot, 2003; contrast with Jeffrey et al. 2008). For a class so dependent on exclusive access to education and government jobs, these developments have created significant anxiety about protecting status privileges (Fernandes and Heller, 2006: 504). Moreover, as the ability of the urban middle classes to secure their interests via privileged access to state power has diminished, the basis for middle class political power has shifted from the state towards the market (ibid, 2006: 503). These developments have engendered new political strategies that reflect a preference for market solution, and the need to patrol the imagined and material boundaries of class privilege. A starting point for research, then, was the impression that middle class politics are in a state of flux, and that this moment of transformation deserves attention.

An initial round of questionnaires and interviews with middle class professionals compounded this interest in middle class political transformation⁵. This early research highlighted the ostensibly ‘a-political’ nature of the new middle class, particularly the renunciation of electoral

⁴ South Asian historiography has emphasized how particular forms of knowledge and skill-sets became valorized through the production of indigenous elites as civil servants and employees during the colonial period (Chatterjee, 1993, 2004; Corbridge, and Harriss, 2000). After independence, these same elites remained intimately connected with the state either through the industry supporting policies of the post-independence period, their ability to command the cultural and material resources of the state, and because of their privileged positions as senior level government officials (ibid; Fernandes, 2000). As a result, a particular type of cultural capital has remained crucial to the ways in which elites consolidated political and economic power in post-independence India⁴

⁵ For this initial sample, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 15 informants, all of who worked in Information Technology sectors. Forty-nine informants were contacted via the software professional list serves for alumni of several Indian technology institutes and universities completed online, multiple-choice questionnaires. Ninety percent of respondents were between the ages of 17-34, 73% were in full time salaried employment, and 83% had achieved at least a Masters Degree.

and party politics. When asked the question, “What does it mean to say that someone is ‘into politics’?”, the recurrent sentiment was that those who were political were dishonest, corrupt, and ineffective:

He/She wants to make money for them and their many more generations to come. A secured life where the bureaucrats, police and official machinery are all at your disposal. You are above the law because there is not even a single instance in the history of our country for convicting a corrupt politician. (Survey Data, 03/28/2008)

One who brags about his Party's Ideals.. but fails to follow them himself, and twists them to suit his needs. (Survey Data, 04/04/2008)

What did emerge from this questioning was the celebration of less State involvement in urban development, management, and governance. From non-governmental organizations to public-private partnerships, to wholesale privatization, it seemed that middle class professionals had lost faith in state-led development, and had turned toward different approaches. While 50% said they were not involved in politics because of lack of time, and a further 43% said that the stigma associated with party politics detracted them from involvement, a majority 54% indicated that if they were to be involved in politics, they would do so via non-governmental forms, as opposed to only 19% who said they would participate in party politics either through electoral support or formal membership. Thus initial research suggested that less formal or non-party modes of political involvement were important to middle class political participation. This finding supported the claims laid out by others who argue that civil society and non-governmental

groups are central to emerging middle class political identities (Harriss, 2005; Arabindoo, 2005; Fernandes and Heller, 2006; Nair, 2006). Together these insights prompted a renewed focus on civil society as an important site for the formation of middle class political identity

One important incarnation of middle class civil society in urban India is the non-governmental organization (NGO). NGO has been deployed to describe a vast range of organizational forms. From village level co-operatives, to transnational solidarity movements, to puppets of the institutions of global governance, NGOs have become an omnipresent feature of development politics in the South (see Mercer, 2002). But the term NGO can be very specific as well. In Chennai, India, a whole host of non-governmental organizations have emerged to tackle issues of urban governance. While there are untold numbers of other NGOs who concern themselves with various livelihood issues in Chennai, these groups are often far less visible and less vocal in the larger debates about how the city is growing and changing. When it comes to urban politics in Chennai, there is an exclusive “NGO scene” (see also Arabindoo, 2005). A peruse of the English-language dailies in Chennai underscores the close-knit nature of scene, as the same NGOs and NGO leaders appear time and again as commentators to controversial development plans, authors of op-ed pieces, and in accounts of public or town meetings and consultations. No greater than a dozen discreet NGOs have become important players in urban politics in the city, most of which are staffed and run by middle class urbanites who desire a voice in the future of the city. Other scholars have described a similar terrain of exclusive, yet influential NGOs, Resident Welfare Associations and Urban “Task Forces” in cities like Bangalore (Nair, 2006), Mumbai (Zerah, 2007), and Delhi (Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2007). What these groups often share in common is a narrative of state failures and corruption, and a desire to create an ordered and clean city, free of civic woes like solid waste or pollution, visible poverty, and neighborhood or

roadway congestion. These political concerns are often discursively contrasted with the political concerns of the urban poor who make demands for (undeserved) basic amenities and who occupy urban space at the margin of legality (Benjamin, 2008; Coelho, 2005; Harriss, 2006). The discourse of urban order that gets espoused by middle class NGOs also resonates with notions of sanitation and containment that sought to order the colonial city (McFarlane, 2008a). There is more than a little irony in the realization that many of these battles over urban space are waged in the former residential enclaves of colonial administrators that now serve as the exclusive neighborhoods of India's urban upper-middle classes (Arabindoo, 2006).

But this irony also begs the question, what is new about this politics? Both during and after British colonialism, Indian civil society functioned as an important domain for the reproduction of class privilege and co-option of state power (Chatterjee, 2004; Sen, 1999). In the years following independence, numerous civil society organizations were formed around Gandhian ideals of morality and service to the nation. These organizations were also important location from which the cultural and moral superiority of elite nationalists was asserted (ibid). The ashrams and voluntary associations that represented these forms of civil society have been described as the predecessors to the middle class NGOs of today (Sen, 1999). Thus when Geeta brands her generation of activists "Midnight's Children" and "Gandhians" she is alluding to this bygone era of Indian civil society. The "conflict with the younger generation" can be read as a tension between older forms of civil society premised on exclusive access to state power buttressed by elite claims to cultural capital and class privilege, and a newer form of elite civil society that draws their power from a politics of economic liberalization and appeals to the lure of the market. While it is this transformation that has captured the critical attention of scholars of the Indian Middle Class, we know much less about the ethnographical dimensions of this

process. In Chennai, the transformation of civil society is often expressed in terms of a generational divide among those who consider themselves 'Midnight's Children' and those who identify with a new urban politics.

This generational divide was evident in comparison between six different NGOs who were active in urban development politics in Chennai. Two of the NGOs shared an organizational structure of a younger generation of NGO activists, who staffed the organizations, and an older generation of advisers, trustees, and founders who offered ideological leadership and who had better contacts and respect among the institutions of the local state. But the other four NGOs were markedly different in their organizational structure, with less of a generational hierarchy, and in fact, very few older, 'seasoned' activists in leadership roles. The staff and leaders of these NGOs were predominantly young professionals who had either left their 'day-jobs' to do something more meaningful, or who volunteered on a part time basis, while remaining in professional, salaried employment. Comparisons between the two types of organizations revealed diverging political aspirations and strategies, and suggested that the latter may in fact represent a new and emerging type of civil society organization. For instance activists working in these 'new style' NGOs expressed a preference for including non-state and private sector actors in devising innovative development solutions. For instance, in a presentation about a public-private partnership in transportation, one NGO leader commented,

In 1991 the economy began opening up and people got richer and once you get richer people realize they have options. Ya know, you don't have to go in a sweaty bus. You don't have to walk through garbage on the footpaths. People like me. So what has happened is the private sector has come in, and they can deliver you cars, they can deliver you computers, they can deliver you cell phones. And the government, very sadly

because of the neglect of city governments, finds it very difficult to deliver with the rising expectations of urban populations.⁶

This approach was contrasted by the approach of the former two NGOs who utilized their professional credentials and elite connections to move the machinery of the State. When asked about the approach of one of these older NGOs, one informant remarked, “our organization, we prefer litigational strategies, you know, going to court.”

What was perhaps most interesting was the reflections from activists within these different organizations about the changing role of middle class political participation. In one interview, the respondent told me that civil society in India was on the verge of being “awakened”, and went on to elaborate,

Take me, I went away to do my postgraduate studies, in the US, and I came back and saw the challenges, from the government and the state of the cities. I thought, we middle class guys, we are educated and we can come up with *new approaches*.

If these new-style NGOs articulate a new approach, something of the nature of the ‘old approach’ is revealed in the following statement from another NGO activist. When asked about how his organization was different the informant commented,

We do our homework. It’s easy to sit out here and complain, and that is an important first step in a society, like checks and balances, but then we need solutions.

Another informant offered a more definite periodization to his critique of previous approaches,

⁶ See conference video: <http://www.um-smart.org/resources/conference/cherubal.html>

When I was younger, people would protest, raise slogans, it was the political culture of that time . . . people were idealistic after all these national heroes . . . but the police would come and disband them and that would be it, nothing. We don't raise slogans, we prefer to get things done.

As a new middle class becomes politically active, their personal accounts of this transformation are revealing. These accounts highlight the complex interplay between class as an economic structure and class as a cultural process. Comments about “we middle class guys” suggest that the new middle class continues to draw on the cultural resources- education, English-language skills- that have been so vital in reproduction of class difference in the colonial and postcolonial periods. But reference to “new approaches” also alludes to the reality that traditional bases of economic and political power for the middle classes- a command of state resources and political influence- is in question. Reflections on generational differences, or ‘old and ‘new’ style politics, are examples of the more personal ways in which people make sense of this shift.

Conclusions

Interviews with NGO activists in Chennai shed light on Geeta's initial remark about “conflict with a younger generation” and about the difference between “Gandhians” and those who “get things done”. The statements of a younger generation of NGO activists, taken alongside Geeta's reflections highlight the profoundly ethnographic and personal ways in which people experience political and economic change. But the emerging practices of political participation via civil society show how class is being reconfigured around economic

liberalization and a preference for market solutions to development. The ways in which middle class civil society groups work to encourage and at times even facilitate private sector involvement in urban development are examples of the complimentary links between a “new Indian middle class” and the politics of economic liberalization that have been described by scholars of the Indian middle class (Fernandes 2006). In this context, civil society has become an important outlet for the (re)production of classed interests. This has in turn changed the tone of urban civil society, wherein disillusionment with state-led development and anxiety about protecting class privilege have spawned a politics of exclusion and privatization in many Indian cities. It is in these new political forms that both cultural and economic basis of class formation reside and where the Indian middle class is revealed as a “class-in-practice” (Fernandes and Heller, 2006).

This focus on class formation as it is rooted in structural transformations is an important correction to an earlier period of postcolonial studies that neglected the practices and material conditions of class inequality. Postcolonial approaches should endeavor to take class seriously, not only because of the persistence of structural inequality on the Indian subcontinent, but because class identities are an important framework through which people enter onto the stage of urban development politics. This paper has utilized ethnography to capture some of the ways in which class identities are articulated with political identities. As such the paper advocates a postcolonial approach that is attuned to the more personal experiences of class as they are articulated with recent histories of economic and political restructuring, as well as the legacies of colonial and postcolonial forms of domination and subordination. Such an approach could generate exciting, political grounded critique of the ways class in being operationalized, reproduced, and reworked in an urban politics of the present.

References

Aradbindoo, Pushpa 2005 A Class Act: The Bourgeois Ordering of Public Spaces in Chennai
Paper presented at the *BASAS Annual Conference*, 2005

— 2006. Neighborhood Transformations in Peri-Urban Chennai. In Dupont, Veronique, and N. Sridharan (eds). *Peri-Urban Dynamics: Case Studies in Chennai, Hyderabad, and Mumbai*. CSH Occasional Paper No. 17, French Research Institute, India.

Benjamin, Solomon 2008. Occupy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy Beyond Policy Programs. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(3), pp. 719-729.

Bhan, Gautam 2009 ‘This is no longer the city I once knew’: Evictions, the urban poor, and the right to the city in millennial Delhi. *Environment and Urbanization*, 21(1), 127-142.

Banerjee-Guha, S. 2006 “Post-Modernism, Post-Fordism and Flexibilized Metropolis: Dialectical Images of Mumbai” in Stuart Corbridge, M. Satish Kumar, Saraswiti Raju (eds.) *Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies of India*. New Delhi: Sage.

Brass, Tom 1993 A-way with Their Wor(l)ds: Rural Laboures Through the Post Modern Prism. *Economic and Political Weekly* June 5, 1993.

Chatterjee, Partha 1993. *The Nation and its Fragments: colonial and postcolonial histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

— 2004. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh 2000 “Radical Histories and Questions of Enlightenment Reason: Some Recent Critiques of Subaltern Studies” in Vinayak Chaturvedi (ed.) *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*. London: Verso.

Coelho, Karen 2005. Unstating the “Public”: An Ethnography of Reform in an Urban Water Utility in South India. In *The Aid Effect: Giving and Governing in International Development*. Mosse and Lewis (eds.) London: Pluto Press, pp. 171-195.

Corbridge, Stuart and Harriss, John 2000: *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism, and Popular Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

D’Costa, A. 2003 “Catching up and Falling Behind: Inequality, IT, and the Asian diaspora” in Kong-Chong Ho, Randy Kluver, Kenneth C. C. Yang (eds.) *Asia.com: Asian Encounters with the Internet*. London: Routledge, pp. 44-66.

Deshpande, Satish 2003: *Contemporary India: A Sociological Review*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Fernandes, Leela 2000: Restructuring the New Middle Class in Liberalizing India. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 20(1,2), pp. 88-104.

—2004. The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power, and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India. *Urban Studies* 41(12), pp. 2415-2430.

—2006. *India’s New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Reform*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Fernandes, Leela and Heller, Patrick 2006: Hegemonic Aspirations: New Middle Class Politics and India’s Democracy in a Comparative Perspective. *Critical Asian Studies* 38(4), pp. 495-522.

Gibson-Graham J. K. Stephen A. Resnick, Richard D. Wolff 2000 “Introduction: Class in a Post Structuralist Frame” in J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick, Richard D. Wolff (eds). *Class and Its Others* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1-22.

Gregory, Derek 2004 *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hansen, Thomas Blom 1999 *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in India*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press

- Harriss, John 2005 Middle Class Activism and Poor People's Politics: an exploration of civil society in Chennai *LSE Working Paper Series* No. 05-72. [Online] Available from: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/DESTIN/pdf/WP72.pdf> [Accessed 12, June 2009]
- 2006: Middle Class Activism and the Politics of the Informal Working Class: a perspective on class relations and civil society in India. *Critical Asian Studies* 38:4, pp. 445-465.
- 2007 Antinomies of Empowerment *Economic and Political Weekly* (42)26, pp. 2716-2724.
- Jacobs, Jane 1996: *Edge of Empire: postcolonialism and the city*. London: Routledge.
- Khilnana, Sunil 1999 Chapter 3: Cities. In *The Idea of India*. New Delhi: Penguin, pp. 107-149.
- Liechty, Mark 2003 *Suitably Modern: making middle class culture in a new consumer society*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- McFarlane, Colin 2008a Governing the Contaminated City: Infrastructure and Sanitation in Colonial and Postcolonial Bombay. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32(2), pp. 415-435
- 2008b Postcolonial Bombay : decline of a cosmopolitan city ? *Environment and planning D : society and space.*, 26 (3). pp. 480-499.
- Mercer, Claire 2002: NGOs, civil society and democratization: a critical review of the literature. *Progress in Development Studies* 2, pp. 5-22.
- Myers, Garth 1999: Colonial Discourse and Africa's colonized middle: Ajit Singh's architecture. *Historical Geography* 27, pp. 27-55.
- Nair, Janaki 2006. Social Municipalism and the New Metropolis. In Mary John et al (eds). *Contested Transformations: Changing Economies and Identities in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Tulika Books, pp. 125-146.
- Nash, Catherine 2002: Cultural geography: postcolonial cultural geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 26(2), pp. 219-230.

Petras, James 1999. NGOs: In the Service of Imperialism. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. 29(4), pp. 429-441.

Philo, Chris 2000. More Words, more worlds: reflections on the 'cultural turn' and human geography. In Simon Naylor and James Ryan. *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns*, Harlow: Prentice Hall, pp. 26-53.

Radhakrishnan, Smitha 2008 Examining the "Global" Indian Middle Class: Gender and Culture in the Silicon Valley/Bangalore Circuit *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(1), pp. 7 – 20.

Rajagopal, Arvind. 1999. Thinking about the New Indian Middle Class: Gender, Advertising and Politics in an Age of Economic Reform. In Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan (eds). *Signposts: Gender Issues in Post-independence India*. New Delhi: Kali for Women. Pp. 57-100.

Sarkar, Sumit 1993 The Facism of the Sangha Parivar *Economic and Political Weekly* 27(5), pp. 163-167.

— 2000 The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies. In Vinayak Chaturvedi (ed.) *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*. London: Verso.

Sidaway, James 2000: Postcolonial Geographies: an exploratory essay. *Progress in Human Geography* 24(4), pp. 591-612.

Tawa Lama-Rewal, Stephanie 2007 Neighborhood Associations and Local Democracy: Delhi Municipal Elections. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 42(7), 51-60.

Zérah, Marie-Hélène. 2007 Middle class Neighbourhood associations as political players in Mumbai *Economic & Political Weekly*, November 24 (2007): 61-68